



Albert Gallatin Area School District
Senior Project Guidelines

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Dear Student,

In addition to your coursework at Albert Gallatin High School, and a passing score of proficiency on state or local math, reading, and writing assessments, you will also be required to complete a graduation or senior project. This packet of information is designed to help you understand the work that must be undertaken to fulfill this graduation obligation.

Wherever your life's work takes you, you will rarely be asked to demonstrate what you know and what you can do through a traditional test. Instead, you will be expected to research, present, and reflect upon ideas in much the same way as you will be doing through your graduation project. You will be asked to demonstrate that you are a complex thinker, a self-directed learner, an effective and creative communicator, and a quality producer. That is why the skills you must use to complete your project are so significant.

Please review this document carefully with your parent(s) or guardian(s). It is important that they have a thorough understanding of this handbook's guidelines in order to support your work to meet our expectations for successful completion of the graduation project requirement.

We encourage you to plan carefully and work well to select a project topic that is challenging and meaningful to you. *It is important to note that while you will have a faculty adviser to help guide you through this process, the responsibility for the final product, and all that goes into it, is yours alone.*

Sincerely yours,
Albert Gallatin Area High School Faculty and Administration

Authority

State Mandate

In accordance with the School Code, the Pennsylvania State Board of Education has established a set of regulations (Chapter 4) in order to, “establish rigorous academic standards and assessments to facilitate the improvement of student achievement.” And in the requirements for high school graduation (4.24), “each school district shall specify requirements for graduation,” which must, “include course completion and grades, **completion of a culminating project**, and results of local assessment aligned with the academic standards.”

District Authority

Included in regulation 4.13 is the mandate that each school district has an action plan to implement and maintain the standards and curriculum set forth in Chapter 4.

The mission statement set forth in our Strategic Plan is:

“The mission of the Albert Gallatin Area School District is to provide every student with a safe, supportive and collaborative environment to promote academic achievement and social growth in a global society.”

The Albert Gallatin School District believes that:

Education is an active process involving the entire community whose responsibility is to educate all students. A partnership between the family and school is necessary for excellence in the educational process. That in order to insure excellence in education, we must remain flexible and willing to adapt to a changing world. All students should be provided every opportunity to reach their potential. High expectations support higher achievement. Excellence in education is achievable and worth the time, energy and investment. The educational community must appreciate and respect individual differences.

All students can learn.

Project Definition

Based upon Pennsylvania Department of Education mandates, and the Albert Gallatin School District's mission, the graduation project is designed to be individualized and an example of a four-year learning experience in the Albert Gallatin High School.

The graduation project is a personalized learning experience, exhibited through a culminating presentation. You will have the opportunity to demonstrate problem-solving, self-directed learning, decision making, and independent research while investigating a specialized area of interest.

Project Categories

Project topics will be chosen from the following categories. Some examples are listed below.

- **Research:** Technology project, independent research project, cultural research, genealogical research, etc.
- **Career Exploration:** Shadow someone in a career that interests you and research that career.
- **Exhibition/Demonstration/Performance Experience:** restore an automobile, create a portfolio of written works, compose an original musical composition, etc.
- **Service Experience:** volunteer at a hospital, animal shelter, or other community organization; organize and conduct a food drive; participate in highway cleanup, etc.

Graduation projects vary depending upon the nature of the undertaking and the approach each individual student selects. These products will be as different as the hands and minds that craft them. Nevertheless, the final product must have both a written and presentation aspect, and will show, as part of both elements, the accomplishments from a four-year-long learning process.

The interest survey (page 11) asks a series of questions that can help to focus your thoughts on subjects or concepts that appeal to you. Each project will be evaluated by the graduation project rubric (page 10).

Graduation Project Requirements

You are responsible for the following:

I. Completing all forms associated with the advising of your project by their due dates including:

- A. Interest Survey (to be completed freshman year)
- B. Proposal (to be completed and returned by May 1 of sophomore year)
- C. Interim report (to be completed and returned by May 1 of junior year)
- D. Presentation date form (to be signed by parent or guardian and returned by October 1 of senior year)
- E. Self-evaluation (to be completed after finishing graduation project; to be turned in at or prior to graduation project presentation)

II. Written research:

The written part will be characterized by the following guidelines:

A research paper that explores the topic of your choice, from thesis to conclusion as discussed and modeled in sophomore English career papers. The paper should reflect the depth and breadth of the approved project proposal. The length requirements for the research paper vary according to project category. The description of each project category outlines the requirements for the written component of each category. The paper must be produced electronically (using word processing software). At least one of the research sources for the project must be from the Internet.

III. Final presentation of product:

The presentation aspect will be characterized by the following guidelines:

- A. Oral introduction and summary of the final product should reflect responses as presented in the project proposal. All information should be accurate, verifiable, and well organized.
- B. The final “product” is tangible evidence of the personalized study that you have undertaken. Since each of you is unique, your products will assume different forms, reflecting your intellectual growth and personal preference. There are four categories for final products: research, career exploration, exhibition/demonstration/performance experience, service experience.

IV. Evaluation process:

The evaluation process includes competency in independent research, quality of your final product, effective written communication, effective oral presentation, and quality of self-assessment and reflection.

Graduation Project Category Requirements

Research: The research project will provide students with the opportunity to investigate and analyze a problem or question.

Written paper:

- At least 8 pages in length
- Works cited page is in **addition** to 8 minimum required pages
- 12 point font, double spaced, 8.5"x 11" with 1" margins according to MLA guidelines
- Produced using word processing software
- At least one source for the paper must be from the Internet

Product:

- Visual display of information gained through research (power point, poster display, video, etc.)
- Oral presentation of information gained through research (to be presented during graduation project presentation)

Career Exploration: The career exploration project will provide the opportunity for students to conduct an in-depth investigation of a career.

Written paper:

- At least 3-5 pages in length
- Works cited page is in **addition** to 3-5 minimum required pages
- 12 point font, double spaced, 8.5"x 11" with 1" margins according to MLA guidelines
- Produced using word processing software
- At least one source for the paper must be from the Internet
- Must include educational requirements

Product:

- Journal that includes:
 1. Two face-to-face interviews and a third interview which can be conducted by telephone, internet, letters, survey, questionnaire, etc. Results of interviews need to be typed.
 2. Shadow at least one person in the chosen career field for one work day
 3. One-two page typed reflection on the interviews and the shadowing
- Visual display of information gained through research (power point, poster display, video, etc.)
- Oral presentation of information gained through research (to be presented during graduation project presentation)

Exhibition/Demonstration/Performance Experience: The exhibition/demonstration/performance experience project will provide students with an opportunity to create an original work of art, an original or pre-existing musical composition, demonstrate a skill or acquired talent, or perform some other activity.

Written paper:

- At least 3-5 pages in length
- Works cited page is in **addition** to 3-5 minimum required pages
- 12 point font, double spaced, 8.5"x 11" with 1" margins according to MLA guidelines
- Produced using word processing software
- At least one source for the paper must be from the Internet

Product:

- Artwork, poetry and musical recitals must include at least 5 pieces
- Performances must be solos, but may have an accompaniment
- Visual display of information gained through research (power point, poster display, video, etc.)
- Oral presentation of information gained through research (to be presented during graduation project presentation)

Service Experience: The service experience project will provide students with the opportunity to explore ways to enhance their communities.

Written paper:

- Based on a least 30 hours of unpaid community service
- At least 3-5 pages in length
- Works cited page is in **addition** to 3-5 minimum required pages
- 12 point font, double spaced, 8.5"x 11" with 1" margins according to MLA guidelines
- Produced using word processing software
- At least one source for the paper must be from the Internet

Product:

- Journal consisting of daily entries detailing activities and reaction plus one interview of a mentor/supervisor
- Time log with supervisor's signature
- Visual display of information gained through research (power point, poster display, video, etc.)
- Oral presentation of information gained through research (to be presented during graduation project presentation)

Timeline

Grade 9

- ☐ Meet and become familiar with adviser.
- ☐ Read and discuss the Graduation Project Handbook with parent/guardian and adviser.
- ☐ Begin considering possible areas of interest.
- ☐ Complete interest survey (page 11) and file in senior project folder.

Grade 10

- ☐ In English 10, complete career paper, utilizing current documentation and research methodologies.
- ☐ Complete proposal (pages 12-13) and gain approval from adviser.
- ☐ Find mentor for topic if needed.
- ☐ Begin individual research on proposal.

Grade 11

- ☐ Conduct continued research on topic.
- ☐ Develop presentation.
- ☐ File interim report with adviser (page 14).

Grade 12

- ☐ Submit final copy of written paper by deadline.
- ☐ Complete “product.”
- ☐ Schedule presentation.
- ☐ Return presentation date form (page 15), with parent or guardian signature, to graduation project coordinator.
- ☐ Complete self-reflective evaluation (page 16) and file with adviser before presentation.
- ☐ If project is unacceptable (see evaluation guidelines page 10), revise paper and/or presentation before May 1 of senior year.

Graduation Project Rubric

NAME _____

DATE _____

I. Project Paperwork (25 Total Points)

- | | | |
|-----------|----------------------------|-------|
| (5 pts.) | Interest survey | _____ |
| (10 pts.) | Signed proposal | _____ |
| (5 pts.) | Interim Report | _____ |
| (5 pts.) | Self-Reflective evaluation | _____ |

25 TOTAL**II. Research Paper (25 Total Points) *Paper must be relevant to product***

- | | | |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------|
| (3 pts.) | Deadlines were met (paper accompanied presentation) | _____ |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------|

Process Paper will be scored based on the PSSA Writing Rubric.

- | | | |
|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| (4 pts.) | Focus | _____ |
| (4 pts.) | Content | _____ |
| (4 pts.) | Organization | _____ |
| (4 pts.) | Style | _____ |
| (4 pts.) | Conventions | _____ |
| (2 pts.) | Processed using word processing software; includes at least one internet source | _____ |

25 TOTAL**III. Product/Presentation (50 Points Total)**

- | | | |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| (10 pts.) | Oral introduction (PA standards for speaking) | _____ |
| (10 pts.) | Creativity and originality of product | _____ |
| (10 pts.) | Effort/quality of product | _____ |
| (10 pts.) | Product includes all required elements of chosen project category (See handbook pages 7-8 for required elements.) | _____ |
| (10 pts.) | Project Analysis: Response to Questions | _____ |

50 TOTAL**TOTAL GRADUATION PROJECT SCORE 100 TOTAL**

Adviser _____ Committee Member _____

Committee Member _____

- Student must achieve 70% or better on each section of the evaluation. If 70% is not achieved student will need to redo that section of the evaluation.
- **If the student does NOT present project on his or her scheduled date, a 10 point deduction will be taken from the final score.**

☐ Project is unsatisfactory for the following reasons (continue on reverse)

Interest Survey

Student name _____

Date _____

Complete the following prompts to document your first step in the process of selecting a topic that is personal and of interest to you!

Things I've always wondered about are:

Things I could teach others to do:

Things I know but want to find out more about:

What I would like to do when I "grow up":

Places I would like to visit or live:

I would like to spend my time doing:

I like looking at:

I like reading about:

A person I would like to talk to is:

I like to collect:

One thing I do best is:

A famous person I would like to meet would be:

Things I like to make are:

TV shows I find interesting are:

Adviser signature _____

Date _____

Proposal Form*

Name _____

Date _____

The project category (see pages 7-8) I have chosen is _____

In at least one paragraph, finish the following statements. Use additional paper if you need more space.

My project is . . .

I think this is a valuable/important project because . . .

When I complete this project, I anticipate knowing . . .

* Page one of two, both forms must be completed to constitute a full proposal form, and the student, parent/guardian, and adviser must sign page two.

My project presents a challenge to me because...

I plan to gather the needed information for my project in the following way:

My final product will take the form of...

Student's Signature _____

Date_____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date_____

Adviser's Signature _____

Date_____

*Page two of two, both forms must be completed to constitute a full proposal form, and this page must be signed by the student, parent/guardian, and adviser

Interim Report

Name_____

Complete this form and submit it to your Adviser.

What are the disciplines or subject areas you have combined or used in your project?

Describe in detail what you have accomplished toward completing your senior project.

What do you need to do to complete your senior project?

What revisions (if any) to your proposal idea, timeline, or resources do you wish to make?

Student's Signature_____

Date_____

Parent/Guardian Signature_____

Date_____

Adviser's Signature_____

Date_____

Graduation Project Presentation Date Form

Date _____

Dear parent or guardian:

_____ is scheduled to present his or her graduation project on _____. The graduation project is a **requirement** for graduation from Albert Gallatin High School. The requirements for the graduation project are listed in the Graduation Project Handbook that students received during their freshman year of high school. A copy of the handbook is also available on line on the Albert Gallatin High School home page. You may also attain a copy of the Graduation Project Handbook by contacting the high school office.

Please sign and date this form. Students are to return the form to the graduation project coordinator by **October 1**.

Student signature _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian signature _____ Date _____

Self-Reflective Evaluation

Respond to the following questions in writing.

Why did you choose this project?

What did you do to complete the project? Tell the story of your search.

What problems did you encounter during your project and how did you deal with them?

What new knowledge, skills, or abilities have you gained as a result of this project?

How might you apply what you have learned in the future?

What do you consider the strength of your project?

Knowing that there is always room for improvement for each of us, what would you do differently in order to improve your project if you were to undertake it again?

Student's Name_____ Date_____

Adviser's Signature_____ Date_____

IDEA starters!

****Note: these ideas are by no means the only options available to you! They are only to serve as possibilities to help you design your unique senior project.**

Arts

- Design and create a portfolio of original artwork.
- Photograph, develop, and display original prints.
- Complete a photo essay.
- Design and create jewelry.
- Commercial Design: Propose artwork for public buildings.
- Design a museum exhibit and compete for 'grant' money.

Architecture

- Design and build a scale model of a home.
- Design and build your own office.
- Design and draw floor plans for a building.
- Design a residential dwelling using 3D computer graphics.

Business

- Track companies in the stock market, invest in stocks, and track its progress.
- Balance a budget for a person or company.
- Research income tax process and help someone with taxes.
- Create a company and/or market a project or service.
- Research the opening of a new business.
- Design advertising campaigns for the books you have read in class.
- Simulate running a bank

Career Exploration

- Investigate a possible career choice.
- Correlate career choice and personal strengths.
- Complete a “job interview” with a portfolio and try to be hired for a specific job related to skills of a current course.
- Teach a lesson.
- Work with a political party during an election.
- Serve in a hospital internship.

Communication

- Investigate and interview a stroke victim.
- Investigate and interview a physically disabled person.
- Create and develop a leadership seminar for students.
- Research information valuable to the elderly as well as local businesses that offer senior citizen discounts. In conjunction with business associations, publish and distribute a pamphlet with such information.
- Compile a scrapbook.
- Engage in a debate.
- Conduct a panel discussion.
- Organize a community event or parade.
- Complete an oral history based on interviews and written sources, and present your findings. Some examples of subject matter are: your family, running a small business, substance abuse, a

labor union, teenage parents, recent immigrants. Create three workable hypotheses based on your preliminary investigations, and four questions you will ask to test out each hypothesis.

Community Service

- Develop and implement Clothes for Kids program.
- Develop and implement a food drive.
- Develop a program at a nursing home.
- Research and develop a program to help the homeless.
- Create a neighborhood watch program.
- Canvass and record placement of smoke detectors in 20-block neighborhood, distributed literature demonstrating need, requirement for placement and need to maintain fresh batteries and reported results to fire department.
- Survey all street signs and report all missing or damaged signs.
- Make Braille games for blind school students. Include handmade game boards, playing pieces, etc., which could be identified by touch.
- Analyze transportation and housing needs in a local municipality.
- Plan and design an efficient day care center.
- Organize a fundraiser for a local hospital

Computer Technology

- Create a web page for a sport, band, or any extra-curricular club.
- Design a computer program for balancing chemical equations.
- Develop a computer tutorial program.
- Develop an interactive computer demonstration.
- Design an extensive web site on the Internet.

Consumer and Family Science

- Design and film a cooking show for teenagers.
- Create and design a clothing line for teenagers.
- Assist in the management of a restaurant or community dinner.
- Research and document your family genealogy.
- Make a cookbook from family recipes that you test yourself.
- Write a new set of etiquette rules for life in the 21st Century.

Dance

- Choreograph an original dance routine.

Drama

- Produce and direct an original play.
- Write and perform a one-person show.
- Design scenery or costumes for a play.

Health/Physical Conditioning

- Develop an individualized diet and exercise program to overcome an eating disorder.
- Investigate and devise a meal plan for a diet program.
- Create an aerobic workout video.
- Investigate and volunteer in a marathon.

Industrial Arts

- Create and design a piece of furniture.
- Construct multiple mechanical safety belt demonstrators for department of public safety.

Landscaping

- Landscape a home or business.
- Landscape nonprofit agency facilities.

Language

- Develop a tutorial for a foreign language.
- Introduce elementary children to a foreign language.
- Create a song in a foreign language.
- Write to a foreign person in his/her language for a significant period.
- Provide bilingual assistance.

Literature/Reading/Writing

- Compose a book of original poetry.
- Help first grade students with reading instruction.
- Write and illustrate a children's story.
- Read a novel and conduct an interview with your favorite author.
- Write and produce a senior edition of a newspaper.
- Build a scale model of the Globe Theatre.
- Increase awareness of parents and parents-to-be of importance of reading to their children and influence reading can have on their future success.
- Research the works of a particular poet and create original works in the style of that writer.
- Write a screenplay of a novel.
- Create a new product and write the technical directions for use.
- Write a biography about someone important in your community.
- Write newspaper articles or editorials set in a studied historical time
- Write editorials about one topic from various perspectives.
- Essay Review: "The Media is the Message": compare and contrast same book/movie, poem/song, and play/musical.

Mathematics

- Study a branch of mathematics not taught in school such as chaos theory and describe its applications to the modern world.

Mechanics/Auto Body

- Restore a classic car.
- Create a portfolio of your original auto body repair.
- Procure materials and construct six motorized wheelchairs for permanent use by home for the elderly.

Music

- Write and arrange a four movement musical piece depicting high school years.
- Create and perform an original music composition.
- Perform in your own music video.

Personal Interest

- Expand upon a hobby or interest, or pursue academic study of subjects NOT included in the high school program of studies.
- Plan and run a golf tournament.
- Design travel, logistics and cultural guides for a world tour-within a budget and time frame.
- Philosophy: Answer an essential question such as: History: Evolution or Revolution?; When is a generalization a stereotype and when not?; Is a mathematical system and invention or a discovery?; Does the "heart know the things the mind cannot"?; Does history repeat itself?; Are there Great Books, and if so by what criteria?

- Get certification from the regional council to teach merit badges about your special interests to boy or girl scouts, and then offer your service to local troops.
- A Rite of Passage Experience: an 8-part portfolio reflecting and analyzing your high school years including: A written autobiography, a reflection on work including a resume, an essay on ethics, a written summary of coursework in science, and an artistic product or written report on art, including an essay on artistic standards used in judging artwork.

Science

- Initiate and complete a nature trail exhibiting different types of trees, plants and some wildlife.
- Investigate and become an organ donor.
- Investigate and complete models of chemical structures.
- Create a Rainforest Action Club.
- Investigate and conduct a water-testing program.
- Build a retaining wall with native rocks to control erosion and water bar for same purpose on trail in mountain preserve.
- Print a pamphlet on conserving energy in the home and distributed to 10,000 homes.
- Develop a simulation.
- Study a species at the zoo and conduct research of evolution.

Social Sciences

- Work with post-traumatic stress syndrome vets.
- Interview survivors of the Holocaust.
- Receive training and conduct tours for a Museum.
- Conduct a heritage day for your community.
- Investigate cultures from different countries.
- Research and lay out historical hike around city/town in cooperation with historical society.
- Rejuvenate a cemetery by cleaning grounds, refurbishing headstones and locating graves.
- Document and map the graveyard, secure its inclusion in state historical directory, provide documentation to local and state family history sites.
- Reenact a historical scene such as the trial of Socrates, Scopes, Brown v. Board, or create a "What if..." scenario.
- Psychological/Sociological surveys, statistical analysis, graphing of results, and write a newspaper article on the meaning of the results.
- Analyze and assess controversial accounts of historical events: Biased? Or just different?
- Review several different textbooks on same events for accuracy.
- Design a "meaningful" textbook on history for children.
- Predict a future event (simulate CIA or State Dept. analysis) in a current country.